



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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Department of Health Says There Is a New Reason To Get Your Flu Vaccination *Common Flu Strain Is Getting Harder to Treat*

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health is stressing the importance of influenza vaccination after tests show a common treatment is no longer working on certain kinds of the flu.

Tests completed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have shown that a common strain of the flu, known as type A H1N1, is becoming resistant to a common treatment. Data shows that of the 50 flu viruses tested, 49 (98%), could not be treated with the antiviral Tamiflu.

“Influenza can be very serious, causing extended periods of missed work or school and hospitalizations. Sometimes it can be serious enough to cause death,” said Abbi Pierce, Immunization Surveillance coordinator for the Department of Health. “This year we will have even fewer options to treat influenza, so it’s that much more important to prevent it and get vaccinated now.”

So far this season, 7 cases of influenza have been reported in North Dakota. One of those cases has been culture confirmed, meaning that more extensive lab tests were done to see what kind (or strain) of flu it was.

“The lab tests confirmed that it was an influenza A H1 strain, which is a normal strain that we see every flu season,” said Michelle Feist, influenza surveillance coordinator. “That is important for us to know because the flu vaccine protects against these normally circulating strains of influenza. This helps us reinforce the importance of getting vaccinated against the flu.”

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Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone be vaccinated against the flu, especially the following:

- All children ages 6 months through 18 years
- Household contacts of infants younger than 6 months
- All adults ages 50 and older
- Residents of long-term care facilities
- Pregnant women
- People of any age who have long-term health problems, such as:
 - Heart disease
 - Lung disease
 - Kidney disease
 - Diabetes
 - Asthma
 - Anemia
 - Weakened immune systems due to HIV/AIDS and cancer treatments
 - Breathing problems due to neuromuscular disorders

People who could spread the disease to those at high risk – such as health-care workers, caregivers and household contacts – also should be vaccinated.

Typical flu symptoms include fever, dry cough, sore throat, headache, muscle aches and extreme fatigue.

For information, contact Abbi Pierce or Michelle Feist at 701.328.2378 or visit www.ndflu.com. Reported influenza case numbers will be updated every Wednesday on the website.

REMEMBER: The flu vaccine can protect not only you, but everyone around you.

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